
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CAL FIRE Provides Tips for Safe Christmas Tree & Holiday Decorations

Sacramento – Twinkling lights, shiny ornaments and the fresh smell of pine are signs of the approaching festivities. While decorations can be a beautiful addition to your home and celebrations, CAL FIRE and firefighters across California are asking everyone to be fire smart as you deck the halls this holiday season.

One of every three home Christmas tree fires is caused by electrical failures, while one in every five is the result of having a heat source too close to the tree. “Using only Underwriters laboratory tested lights in excellent condition and keeping your tree away from heat sources are important steps to keeping your family and home safe this holiday,” said State Fire Marshal Tonya Hoover, CAL FIRE-Office of the State Fire Marshal. “These are simple choices that will help keep your holiday a joyful time by preventing possible tragedy.”

Follow these simple safety tips to help ensure a safe and happy holiday:

Christmas Trees

- Choose a fresh tree with green needles that do not fall off when touched.
- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 2” from the base of the trunk.
- Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add more water daily.
- Make sure the tree, live or artificial, is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- Decorate Christmas trees with lights that have been tested and labeled by a recognized testing lab.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer’s instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Never use lit candles to decorate any tree.
- Always unplug Christmas tree lights when leaving home or going to bed.

Holiday Decorations

- Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Use indoor lights indoors and outdoor lights outdoors.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Keep your exits clear by keeping decorations away from windows and doors.

For more information on holiday safety, click [here](#) to watch a short video or go to www.fire.ca.gov for more information.